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## Original Research Article

# Retailer's perception of curry powder brands in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

The perception of retailers is crucial for consumer trust, brand reputation, and competitive advantage. It influences customer choices, employee engagement, investor confidence, and supplier relationships, ultimately impacting the success and sustainability of retail businesses. This research study explored the retailers' perception towards curry powders in Kerala. The findings provide valuable insights into the factors that influence retailers' perceptions and shed light on their preferences and attitudes towards curry powders. Retailers play a crucial role as intermediaries between curry powder manufacturers and consumers. Their perceptions shape their product selection, merchandising decisions, and customer recommendations. Gaining insights into retailers' preferences and attitudes can aid curry powder manufacturers in developing effective marketing strategies, enhancing product quality, and meeting consumer demands.

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## 1. Introduction

Curry powder is a widely used ingredient in Indian cuisine, known for its distinct flavors and aromatic blends of spices. In Kerala, curry powder plays a pivotal role in enhancing the flavors of local delicacies. Retailers, as key intermediaries between manufacturers and consumers, play a crucial role in the distribution and promotion of curry powder brands. Retailer's perception, preference, and attitudes towards various curry powder brands significantly influences consumers' purchasing decisions and brand preferences. Understanding retailers' perspectives on curry powder brands is essential for manufacturers and marketers to develop effective strategies that cater to the needs and preferences of both retailers and consumers.<sup>1-4</sup> However, despite the importance of retailers' perceptions, there is limited research focusing specifically on their perspectives towards curry powder brands in Kerala and is attempted.

### 1.1. Objectives:

The main Objectives are;

1. To assess retailers' awareness and familiarity with different curry powder brands in Kerala.
2. To identify the factors influencing retailers' preferences for specific curry powder brands.
3. To evaluate retailers' perceptions of the quality, packaging, pricing, and branding strategies employed by curry powder brands.
4. To determine the challenges faced by retailers in promoting and selling curry powder brands.

### 1.2. Review of literature

Rudrabasavaraj (2010) observed retailing as a socio-economic system, which brings people together, to exchange goods and services for a small consideration. Amit and Kameshvari (2012) defined retailing as a group of activities where goods and services are marketed to

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final consumers for personal or household consuming. Kotler and Armstrong (2012), Aydın, (2013) and Perreault, et al. (2013) represents retailing consists of all of the activities of goods sold to ultimate buyers. Retailing thus, is seen as the ultimate gate in the delivering of products, for consumption by the final consumers (Arora, 2012).[6-9]<sup>5-7</sup> A retailing or retailer’s function is important for consumers and manufacturers and wholesalers (Mucuk, 2009) Hemchandra Javeri (2010), and Fernandes(2006) considered, proximity, variety and assortment, quality and service play crucial roles in emerging consumers“ retailer selection and purchase decisions.

**2. Materials and Methods**

This research study aimed to investigate retailers’ perception towards curry powders in Kerala. A descriptive research design was employed to gather data and analyze the results. The sample size for this study consisted of 50 retailers selected from different regions of Kerala. Convenience sampling was utilized, wherein retailers were chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data on retailers’ perception towards curry powder.<sup>1-3,8</sup> The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions to capture a comprehensive understanding of retailers’ perspectives and was pre-tested with a small group of retailers to ensure its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the questionnaire before administering it to the final sample. Analytical tools used are Chi-Square Test, ANOVA, Percentage Analysis and Ranking Method

**3. Results, Analysis and Discussion**

*3.1. Relationship between retailer’s experience level and perception of brand quality*

There is no significant difference in the mean perception of brand quality across the different experience groups of retailers (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Relationship between retailer’s experience level and perception of brand quality

Less than 5 Years	5 to 10 Years	More than 10 Years
7	8	9
6	7	8
5	6	9
8	9	7
6	7	8
$\sum xi = 32$	$\sum xi = 37$	$\sum xi = 41$

*3.2. Which curry powder brands do you currently stock in your store:*

Most of the retail stores have Eastern (48/50), Kitchen Tressures (46/50), Melam (32/50); and other curry powder brands like Double Horse (28/50), Brahmins(21/50), Nirapara (19/50) and Neyyar (12/50) are not available in many stores (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Currypowder brands current stock in store

Curry Powder Brands	No. of Retail Stores (Out of 50 stores)
Kitchen Tressures	46
Eastern	48
Melam	32
Double Horse	28
Neyyar	12
Nirapara	19
Brahmins	21
Source: Primary data	

*3.3. Specific curry powder brands find more popular among customers*

From Tables 3 and 4 it is clear that the main reason for the popularity of curry powders is quality and advertisement. Price does not play vital role in popularity since most of the curry powder brands has same price.

**Table 3:** Specific curry powder brands find more popular among customers

Brands	Quality	Price	Packaging	Advertisement
Kitchen Tressures	23	1	9	18
Eastern	24	2	12	12
Melam	20	8	6	4
Double Horse	18	3	7	12

*3.4. Criteria considered by retailers when selecting curry powder brands to stock in store*

The main criteria considered by retailers when stocking the curry powders is Quality of Product (Rank 1), then Customer Demand (Rank 2), Brand Recognition (Rank 3) and Packaging (Rank 4). The Shelf Life (rank 5), availability (Rank 6) and Margin and Price (Rank 7), areast considered.<sup>4-7</sup>

*3.5. Promotional activities conducted by curry powder brands*

From the analysis it is visible that 32% of retailers strongly agrees and 40% of retailers agrees that the marketing or

**Table 4:** Criteria considered by retailers when selecting curry powder brands to stock

Factors	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Average	Rank
Quality	0	0	3	5	12	11	19	50	64.85	1
Score	0	0	21	42	108	93	190	454		
Packaging	3	7	6	5	8	12	9	50	48	4
Score	8	22	31	26	63	108	78	336		
Brand Reputation	2	3	5	4	7	8	21	50	55.57	3
Score	9	16	35	29	55	63	182	389		
Price & Margin	3	2	5	8	13	11	8	50	44.28	6
Score	18	9	23	37	72	91	60	310		
Availability	7	4	6	9	4	8	12	50	42.43	7
Score	34	19	22	40	28	59	95	297		
Customer Demand	3	1	5	6	7	12	15	50	59.71	2
Score	18	7	38	52	58	98	147	418		
Shelf Life	5	3	4	6	11	7	14	50	47.43	5
Score	21	10	24	35	82	59	101	332		

**Table 5:** Promotional activities conducted by curry powder brands

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	32
Agree	20	40
Moderate	7	14
Disagree	3	6
Total	50	100

**Table 6:** Brand popularity vs packaging impact

Brands	Low Impact	Moderate Impact	High Impact	Total
Most Popular Brand	6	8	10	24
Popular Brand	3	5	8	16
Neutral Brand	1	2	4	7
Least popular Brand	0	1	2	3
Total	10	16	24	50

Chi square: 25.677  
Source: Primary data

**Table 7:** Brand loyalty vs repeated purchase

	Repeated Purchases	No Repeat Purchases	Total
Extremely Important	17	3	20
Very Important	9	4	13
Moderately Important	7	3	10
Slightly important	4	1	5
Not Important	2	0	2
Total	12	38	50

Chi square: 81.9121  
Source: Primary data

promotional activities conducted by curry powder brands have a significant impact on store's sales while 14% of retailers have moderate stand and remaining, 6% of retailers disagree this statement and they stands with quality and packaging of product has significant impact on store's sales (Table 5).

### 3.6. Brand popularity vs packaging impact

Table 6 Show's that, the calculated value of Chi square test is 25.677. This shows that there is a significant relationship between the perceived popularity of curry powder brands and the impact of packaging and labeling on customer purchasing decisions.

### 3.7. Importance of brand loyalty for customers when it comes to choosing curry powder brands

Relationship between the importance of brand loyalty and the observation of repeat purchases shows that there is a significant relationship between the importance of brand loyalty and the observation of repeat purchases (Table 7), from the analysis, the calculated value of Chi square test is 81.9121.

### 3.8. The main challenges retailers faced in promoting and selling curry powder brands in Kerala

Based on the responses provided by retailers, several key challenges emerged in promoting and selling curry powder brands in Kerala are chalked out. These challenges include limited consumer awareness and demand for curry powder brands, difficulty in effectively communicating the unique selling points of different curry powder brands, pricing challenges, issues with product availability and timely delivery, limited shelf space and display opportunities in retail stores, lack of promotional support from curry powder manufacturers, concerns about the quality and consistency of curry powder brands.

## 4. Major Findings

1. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of brand quality across different experience groups of retailers. This suggests that retailers' experience level does not significantly impact their perception of brand quality.
2. The most commonly stocked curry powder brands among retail stores in Kerala were found to be Eastern, Kitchen Treasures, and Melam. Other brands such as Double Horse, Brahmins, Nirapara, and Neyyar were less widely available.
3. The quality and advertising were the main factors contributing to the popularity of curry powder brands, while price played a lesser role due to similar pricing across most brands.

4. Retailers primarily consider the quality of the product and customer demand when stocking curry powders. Brand recognition and packaging were also important criteria, whereas factors like shelf life, margin, price, and availability were of lesser importance.
5. Additionally, promotional activities conducted by curry powder brands were found to have a significant impact on store sales, emphasizing the importance of effective marketing strategies.
6. There is significant relationship between the perceived popularity of curry powder brands and the impact of packaging and labeling on customer purchasing decisions. This underscores the significance of attractive and informative packaging.
7. Moreover, brand loyalty was found to be closely related to repeat purchases, suggesting that loyal customers are more likely to consistently choose a particular curry powder brand.
8. The study identified several challenges in promoting and selling curry powder brands in Kerala.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examined retailers' perception towards curry powder brands in Kerala. The findings provide valuable insights into various aspects of brand perception, stocking criteria, popularity drivers, and challenges faced by retailers in promoting and selling curry powder brands. Retailers play a significant role in the distribution and stocking of curry powder brands, making their perception a key factor in brand success. Factors such as product quality, customer demand, brand recognition, and appealing packaging are prioritized by retailers when selecting curry powders for their stores. Effective marketing strategies and addressing challenges such as limited consumer awareness, communication difficulties, pricing issues, and promotional support are essential for brand success. Acknowledging and aligning with retailers' perception can lead to improved brand positioning, better market penetration, and increased customer loyalty. By recognizing and catering to the needs and preferences of retailers, curry powder brands can thrive in the competitive market of Kerala.

## 6. Source of Funding

None.

## 7. Conflict of Interest

None.

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